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ABSTRACT

This paper outlines a specific distance education solution to a condition of teacher shortage involving the collaboration of two major institutions of higher education in two countries: the Open University of the United Kingdom and the California State University System of California, United States. The paper explores global challenges facing teacher educators in preparing teachers for the 21st century and specifically addresses the potential of new models of distance education in providing solutions. The Open University's model and principles for supporting open learning in teacher preparation are outlined, and the California State University program that resulted from the collaboration is described. The paper also discusses the process of collaboration and potential for adapting the Open University's model in other cultural contexts, and it identifies areas for ongoing evaluation enabling international comparisons. (Author/SM)

**Innovative International Collaboration in Teacher Preparation in
the context of global teacher education challenges: Open University
(UK) and California State University (US)**

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Introduction

This paper outlines a specific distance education solution to a condition of teacher shortage, involving the collaboration of two major institutions of higher education in two countries: The Open University of the United Kingdom, and The California State University System of California, United States. The paper explores global challenges facing teacher educators in preparing teachers for the 21st Century and specifically addresses the potential of new models of distance education in providing solutions. The Open University's model and principles for supported open learning in teacher preparation is outlined and the CSU program resulting from the collaboration is described. The process of collaboration and potential for adapting the OU's model in other cultural contexts is discussed. Areas for ongoing evaluation enabling international comparisons are identified.

Background

All over the world education systems are undergoing transformation with most countries placing teacher education reform at the heart of national policies. Schooling and higher education are being expanded and populations are increasing, producing huge demands for teacher preparation. Policies linked to reducing class sizes and growing economies capturing the graduate employment market mean that teacher shortage is also a major issue in countries such as the US and UK. There is no North-South divide on this issue: teacher shortage is now a global challenge.

Concern about the quality of schools and hence the quality of teachers has become a key topic of professional debate and media pronouncements in both the US and UK. The American Council on Education has entered this debate urging college and university presidents to act to transform the way teachers are taught (ACE 1999). In other countries, issues of upgrading teacher's education qualification beyond secondary school level is prioritized (UNESCO 2000). The challenge of improving teacher quality is also a global issue.

This twin challenge of teacher shortage and teacher quality has led to widespread concern as to whether the 'bricks and mortar' institutions of the 20th century have the capacity to meet the volume of professional training required (Moon 1998). The solution may, therefore, lie in distance-learning models of teacher education which, given the new technologies, can clearly address the scale of the problem. However, new models for teacher education would need to deliver on these four fronts: quality, access, flexibility and costs (Moon and Shelton Mayes (1995).

- quality of provision is essential if teacher education is to model the teaching and learning environment we expect teachers to develop in practice.
- access to teacher education is a critical factor, particularly in providing opportunities for professional upgrading for serving teachers or pre-service training to non traditional entrants such as mature or second career entrants.
- flexibility, recognizing that individual teachers have specific needs at specific points in their careers that must be addressed within a teacher education programme

- cost, recognizing that meeting the professional education and training needs of dispersed populations of teachers cannot be met by expensive expansion of 'bricks and mortar' institutions.

Critically, if the challenge of improving teacher quality is to be addressed, these new models of teacher education must go further in embracing the school as a site for teacher professional education so that there are genuine opportunities to integrate the professional development of teachers in terms of knowledge and performance (Moon and Shelton Mayes 1995b; Moon 1998). Such models would also reach to the heart of school improvement in focussing teacher education on improving classroom practice.

Open University (UK) Supported Open Learning and Teacher Education

The Open University (UK) has over thirty years experience in developing open and distance learning models with a mission to provide high quality opportunities for higher education for adults who are unable to access conventional university education. Since its inception, the Open University has provided in-service professional development programs for teachers. Serving teachers form a community of learners who well match the OU learner profile who, because of personal or employment commitments, requires extreme flexibility in terms of where and when they can study, and hence may need a distance education route.

In the context of a teacher recruitment crisis in the UK in the 1990's and in line with the analysis set out above, the OU has developed a third generation distance education model (Moon 1998): a supported open learning model specifically for teacher education and training. This supported open learning model exploits the interactivity and communicative possibilities of the new technologies, has a rich range of multi-media resources and, importantly, is both school-based and school-focused. Significantly, these third generation programs use the school as a site for teacher learning and assessment, requiring procedures for assessing professional knowledge, understanding *and* teaching competence in an integrated way.

In 1994 Open University (UK) launched the first of such courses to provide a part-time national, supported open learning pre-service teacher training and education program - the Open University's Postgraduate Certificate in Education (OU PGCE). Since that time over 4,000 primary and secondary teachers have graduated from the programme and are, now, teaching in schools. The OU PGCE model represented a unique shift in teacher education models in the UK, providing a national, high volume, geographically dispersed student population with access to a part-time flexible open and distance learning route to qualified teacher status. From its inception it became the largest provider of postgraduate pre-service teacher training in the UK for primary and secondary phases.

The program is based on a conceptual model that is underpinned by these principles (Moon and Shelton Mayes 1995) (Banks and Shelton Mayes 1998):

- First - high quality learning resources that are school-focused in their design and directly address the question of improved teacher practice (see appendix diagram 1)

- Second - the school as the focus for teacher training and assessment positions school and university in close professional partnership at all stages of the course - selection, training, assessment and quality assurance.
- Third - direct and personal support for the trainee teachers working independently or in small groups. The trainee is at the centre of triangulated support from university and school staff. New technologies have an important role to play here in creating a virtual campus with access to national subject specific e-conferences and regional support. (see appendix diagram 2)
- Four - criteria for the assessment of professional competences and qualities are made explicit to the trainee teachers and provide an integrating structure for all resource-based self-study and school-based activities. Triangulation of assessment - trainee self-assessment, university tutor and school mentor assessment all operate within the same explicit outcomes framework and lead to tightly prescribed portfolios of evidence (see appendix diagram 3 and 4)
- Five - The scale of the program and focus on school-based training and assessment raises issues of variability that requires a new approach to quality assurance. High quality is assured through systems based on explicit outcomes; prescribed common frameworks; triangulated evidence; interconnected procedures and systematic indirect and direct monitoring. (see appendix diagram 5)

The program has been highly successful in recruiting and training people who could not access traditional pre-service teacher training routes and as such has made a strong contribution to UK teacher recruitment during a time of unprecedented teacher shortage. It has also recruited well from different sectors of the population, such as ethnic minority, mature and disabled groups who may require a higher level of flexibility in a teacher education programme.

The program model has since been extended to other aspects of teacher education in the UK such as the training of headteachers (principals), classroom teacher assistants, and most recently the OU has become the largest provider of Information and Communication Technology training for classroom teachers in the UK.

California context for a Supported Open Learning response

California shares many of the issues identified as global challenges in teacher education. Elementary classrooms in California are currently staffed with approximately 15,000 teachers who are not qualified and do not have appropriate certification. These teachers hold either a waiver or an emergency permit. It is estimated that by 2008, California will need between 250,000 and 300,000 additional teachers. The burgeoning demand for fully credentialed school personnel is overwhelming the capacity of the teacher preparation programs. In 1997, 12,000 individuals were recommended for credentials by the combined 21 teacher preparation programs in the CSU. This represents 60% of California teachers and 10% of the teachers for the United States as a whole. Campus programs cannot increase capacity

fast enough to meet the need using current models of teacher preparation and, hence, CSU has looked to other models.

In this context, CSU approached the OU with a view to evaluating the potential for developing a supported open learning program specifically to address the needs of emergency credentialed primary teachers in California. The result of the collaboration is CalStateTEACH, an innovative teacher credentialing program modelled on the highly regarded Open University (UK) PGCE program. It was not possible to make extensive use of the OU PGCE materials directly, given that the UK program was designed for pre-service trainee teachers whereas the California context required a program aimed specifically at teachers working full-time in schools in an unqualified capacity. However, the CalStateTEACH program includes the following key elements of the OU PGCE approach:

- curriculum is based on the latest research in pedagogy in elementary education
- curriculum is developed by faculty teams developing an integrated curriculum approach
- a competency-based assessment model with clearly articulated learning outcomes and assessment criteria
- participants study and learn independently but must maintain the pace of their respective cohorts to complete the program in 18 months
- participants are grouped in groups or cohorts of Intern teachers with each cohort guided and supported by one Learning Support Faculty member
- about half of the learning occurs where the participant is teaching (i.e. school-based), with the school site becoming an important professional learning environment
- regional centers are established to serve as support centers for participants and as home bases for Learning Support Faculty members
- communication among Intern teachers and between Intern teachers and their Learning Support Faculty occurs via telephone, e-mail, and in person at school sites and regional centers

The other critical factors in adopting an OU supported open learning model is that the program has the potential to grow quickly to large scale, and that the teacher education program can operate wherever the emergency credentialed teacher is working.

The CalStateTEACH program enrolled its first students in Autumn 1999 and the second cohort in January 2000. A detailed description of the CalStateTEACH program is set out in Appendix 2.

The OU/CSU collaboration

Essentially the collaboration was developed on the basis of OU consultancy plus the negotiation of the use of the intellectual rights to the OU model. The CSU team were working within an extremely tight production schedule to produce a fully operationalised program within 12 months and it was important to have access to all aspects of the OU PGCE program - production model, presentation model, regional support systems, assessment and quality assurance model, and curriculum materials as exemplification - to inform the development of a credentialing program that is specific to the cultural and professional framework of US teacher education within California.

The collaboration was successful in achieving its key objective to produce an innovative credentialing teacher education program in order to make a contribution to reducing teacher shortage in California and widen access routes to teacher qualification. The collaboration was also fruitful in raising important issues that we offer as lessons to inform future international collaborations.

- models and principles can be transferable between different cultural and education contexts. Common ground can be established in terms of systems, structures and curriculum issues, such as
 - integration of theory and practice, and self-study and school-based activities to promote (i) critical engagement with practice and (ii) coherence and progression throughout program
 - assessment models that recognize the importance of integrating professional knowledge and teaching competence to address issues of teacher quality
- curriculum material for teacher education is not easily directly transferable as this material is culturally derived.
- programs deriving from a common supported open learning model will be uniquely and specifically adapted to a given cultural and professional context
- new development of model provides a stimulus for further development in supported open learning e.g. CalStateTEACH web-based material and assessment
- common ground in terms of educational goals between academics provides rich opportunity for academic cross-fertilization beyond the project.

Though the collaboration was directed at producing a supported open learning solution to a specific emergency credentialing issue in California, many of the principles associated with assessment, school/university partnership, school as site for teacher training and assessment, and curriculum and assessment integration are also important to consider in the context of conventional full-time models of teacher education. CSU and OU believe this supported open learning model has the potential to become an important new route for teacher preparation and education throughout the US.

International Research and Evaluation

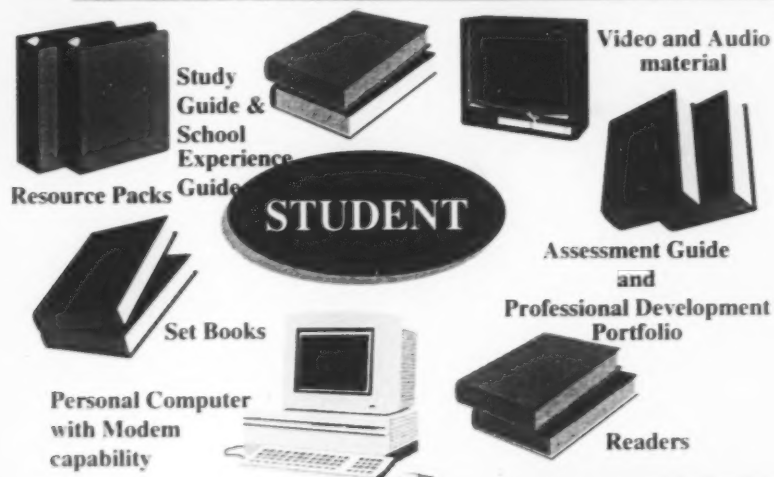
The OU PGCE program has been in operation in the UK since 1994 focusing on pre-service teacher training. In the 1990's a number of international projects in the 1990's between the Open University (UK) and higher education institutions in Albania, Egypt and South Africa (Leach and Lita 1998) (Dyab, Gamal El-Din and Leach 1998) were initiated. The focus in each of these three projects was on developing the practice of serving teachers. In 1999 CalStateTEACH enrolled its first emergency credentialed teachers. The original OU teacher education model has been extended and developed to fit a range of cultural contexts, pre-service and in-service needs.

It is early days to evaluate the impact of the model on California teacher supply and quality but there is a rich source of data now available from the UK program and evaluations are already taking place in Albania, South Africa, and Egypt. Together these programs provides a unique opportunity for international collaborative research into the impact of third generation, distance education models on global teacher issues. Dimensions, such as teacher profiles in terms of gender, ethnicity and age, the retention of teachers within the profession, and the impact on the quality of children's learning and school improvement are important areas to investigate.

The 21st century begins with an explosion of new technologies and accompanying opportunities to address the global challenge of teacher shortage and teacher quality. This model of teacher education, as it is developed through the interaction of educators across continents, may offer some solutions to the challenge of educating children for the 21st century.

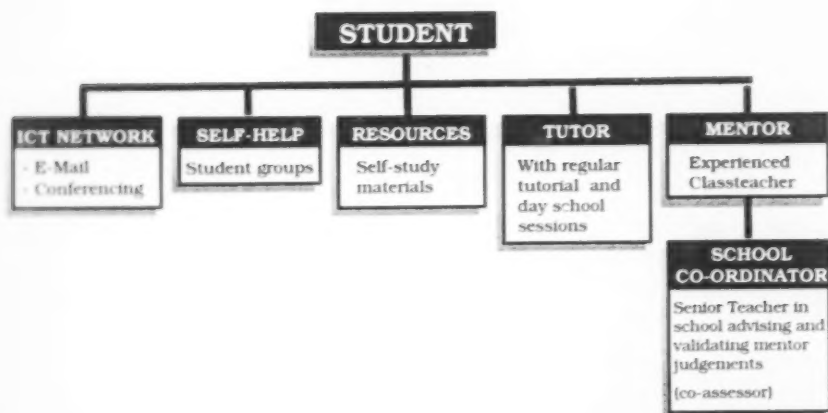
Appendix 1

Teaching and assessment methodologies for third generation teacher education models



The Open University PGCE
Diagram 1

Teaching and assessment methodologies - University School partnership model



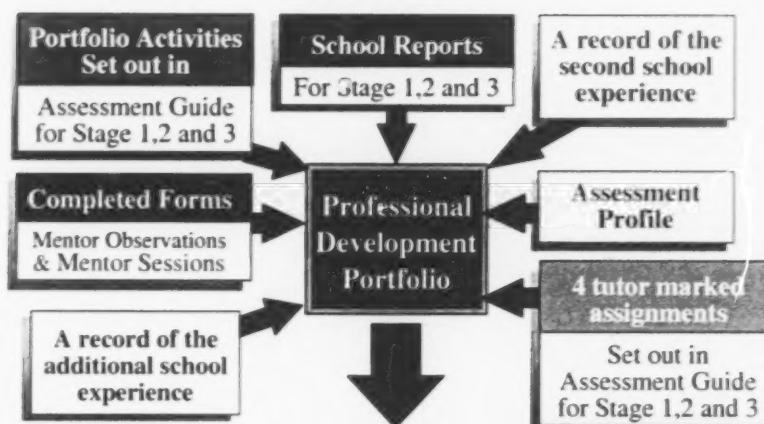
The Open University PGCE
Diagram 2

Standards based assessment

KEY AREA 1	KEY AREA 2		KEY AREA 3
	TEACHING COMPETENCES		
SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE	A	Planning and Evaluation	PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES
	B	Teaching Methods & Strategies	
	C	Classroom management	
	D	Assessment, Reporting & Recording	
	E	Wider professional role	

The Open University PGCE
Diagram 3

Standards based assessment



The Open University PGCE
Diagram 4

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CalStateTEACH is a multiple subjects. Intern program that has been designed initially for fully employed elementary teachers holding emergency permits or waivers. The program may also attract prospective teachers unable to access campus programs due to full-time employment, unworkable commuting distances, or those who have completed a baccalaureate and desire a non-traditional route to a credential. This approach considers the Intern Teacher's classroom experience central to the learning and is designed to integrate that experience with academic knowledge toward the attainment of the program outcomes. It is a system wide program with a common curriculum and an identified support system operated by CSU regional centers, each headed by a Regional Center Academic Director (RCAD). The program focuses on currently employed teachers working with emergency permits. When they enter CalStateTEACH, they will become Intern Teachers who are guided and advised by CSU Learning Support Faculty (LSF) associated with the regional centers. Additionally, each Intern Teacher will be mentored by Adjunct Site Faculty (ASF) in the school where the Intern Teacher is employed.

This new program is available to students residing and teaching in any geographical location in California. There are no regular university classes to attend, although there are five Saturday seminars over the course of the 18-month program. Participants can study at the place and time of their choice while adhering to a common schedule for submitting assignments and fulfilling other academic requirements. They will begin the program when their respective cohorts begin and will be required to maintain the pace of their cohorts. They will be expected to submit written assignments at set times, participate in the four stages for established periods of time, and take examinations on fixed dates. This is an open, independent learning experience, but not a self-paced program.

After acceptance, students become members of small groups with their own CSU Learning Support Faculty (LSF) member. Through agreements with the CSU, school districts assign an experienced teacher from the district to work with CalStateTEACH students. Both the university and school site faculty provide feedback on the teaching. Intern Teachers will receive an orientation and all course materials at the beginning of the program. Candidates progress through a study guide that presents assignments and activities that are integrated with their teaching. Self-directed study, completion of assignments, and preparation for examinations requires approximately 12 hours per week.

Participants completing CalStateTEACH earn the equivalent of 39 semester units, half of which will be units for intern teaching, observation, and application in K-6 classrooms. The remaining 19 units will be devoted to the normal multiple subject credential coursework plus the infusion of Cross-cultural, Language and Academic Development (CLAD), mainstreaming, and technology curricula. The CalStateTEACH curriculum is integrated and does not consist of individual courses. Unit credit is only earned for completed stages of the program.

The CalStateTEACH program enrolled its first students in Autumn 1999 and the second cohort in January 2000.

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